

# 1 Corinthians 4:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

## Analysis

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**Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.** Dysphēmoumenoi parakaloumen (δυσφημούμενοι παρακαλοῦμεν, "being slandered, we exhort/encourage")—Paul responds to malicious speech with gracious appeal. The final two metaphors are shocking: perikatharmata (περικαθάρματα, "filth/scum/refuse") and peripsēma (περίψημα, "offscouring/scrapings")—terms for garbage swept away or scapegoats bearing community sins.

These words may allude to a pagan custom where criminals or outcasts were expelled or killed during disasters to purify the city—human pharmakoi (scapegoats). Paul embraces this imagery: apostles are treated as expendable pollution, society's trash. Yet this very degradation fulfills Christ's example, who "became sin for us" (2 Cor 5:21) and died outside the camp, bearing our shame (Heb 13:12-13). The phrase heōs arti (ἕως ἅρτι, "until now") reiterates ongoing reality—not past tribulation but present experience.

## Historical Context

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Greek cities occasionally practiced pharmakos rituals, expelling or killing marginalized individuals (criminals, slaves, deformed persons) to avert divine wrath. Whether Paul directly references this or simply uses metaphorical language, his point is clear: apostles occupy the lowest social stratum, bearing

vicarious shame for the gospel. This stark imagery climaxes the suffering catalog (vv. 9-13) before Paul pivots to paternal affection (v. 14).

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. Are you willing to be considered 'scum and refuse' by the world—or even by other Christians—for the sake of gospel faithfulness?
2. How does this verse challenge prosperity gospel promises and Christian pursuit of cultural influence and respectability?
3. What 'slander' or 'defamation' might you face if you more boldly proclaimed unpopular biblical truths, and how can you prepare to respond with gracious entreaty rather than defensive anger?

## Interlinear Text

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βλασφημούμενοι	παρακαλοῦμεν·	ώς	περικαθάρματα	τοῦ	
<b>Being defamed</b> G987	<b>we intreat</b> G3870	<b>as</b> G5613	<b>the filth</b> G4027		G3588
κόσμου	ἐγενήθημεν	πάντων	περίψημα	ἔως	ἄρτι
<b>of the world</b> G2889	<b>we are made</b> G1096	<b>of all things</b> G3956	<b>and are the offscouring</b> G4067	<b>unto</b> G2193	<b>this day</b> G737

## Additional Cross-References

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**Lamentations 3:45** (Creation): Thou hast made us as the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people.